

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Claim 1 is objected to because of the following minor issue: claim 1 is presented in the list of claims with the qualifier "(ORIGINAL)" rather than --(CANCELLED)--.

Applicant notes in his remarks on page 1 of the response that claim 1 has been cancelled and no arguments are presented against the rejection of claim 1. Thus it appears applicant intends to cancel claim 1. Please correct the qualifier in claim 1 in the next response. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 11-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 11, lines 6 and 7, "the male end" lacks clear antecedent basis since line 5 recites a "male rear segment". Likewise in claim 15, lines 8 and 9 and in claim 16, lines 7 and 8.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 2-10,21,24 are allowed.

5. Claims 11-16 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 11-16 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Upon further review of the claims, the new rejection under 35 USC 112, 2nd was deemed necessary to correct antecedent issues in claims 11,15,16 and 17. However, applicant's arguments against the prior art rejection of claim 11 are persuasive.

Conclusion

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to SUZANNE BARRETT whose telephone number is (571)272-7053. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 7:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Cuomo can be reached on 571-272-6856. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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